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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 001076

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KAWC](#) [EU](#) [HR](#) [LO](#) [ICTY](#)

SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA SEEKS "BALANCED" EU POSITION ON CROATIA

REF: STATE 254097

Classified By: DCM Scott N. Thayer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) POLEC Chief delivered reftel demarche to the MFA European Correspondent Lubomir Rehak on November 30. Rehak said the MFA had sent its delegation in Brussels "a different instruction" on November 29. Slovakia thinks the draft language being circulated on ICTY conditionality is "too strong," and would like to see a more balanced review of Croatia's progress. Slovakia will insist on compliance with the ICTY, but does not want Carla del Ponte's word to be the sole decision-making factor on Croatia's progress. Croatia is doing well in other spheres and can serve as a good example for other Balkan states.

2. (C) Rehak agreed on the importance of a united front between the U.S. and EU and suggested the Slovak position "could change."

3. (C) Rehak said that Slovakia was not convinced a hard-line approach was the most effective way to win cooperation with ICTY. He shared an informal paper on Kosovo (the Slovak contribution to the analysis of SITCEN GS of the Council), highlighting the idea that the arrest of Ramush Haradinaj in Kosovo would send a signal to other Balkan countries that the ICTY wasn't targeting only certain nations. Public perception against sending other indictees to the Hague (Mladic, Gotovina) could be softened. Partial text follows (entire paper faxed to EUR/NCE):

"The situation in Kosovo and in the all-Serbian context could be significantly influenced by the realization of Carla del Ponte's notified intention to issue a warrant on several k/Albanians, above all Ramush Haradinaj. There is no need to be afraid of this step despite threats that Pristina is distributing around the whole world; there is no threat of a national uprising and the smaller organized riots can be handled by KFOR. Television broadcasting of the trial with Haradinaj would, similarly as the Milosevic trial in Serbia, contribute to revealing ways the radicals were "fighting" for independence of Kosovo and naturally, in the public opinion the radicals would slide to the margin of public life. It can be assumed that a trial with Haradinaj would also significantly contribute to Belgrade's willingness to extradite Ratko Mladic and the Serbian "Kosovo" generals to the Hague. Undoubtedly, the Serbian public stance on Kosovo would improve, bringing more willingness to resolving its status."

WEISER

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